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A

TREATISE

ON

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION:

IN WHICH ARE ILLUSTRATED

THE

PROFESSION, MINISTRY, WORSHIP, AND FAITH

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY JESSE KERSEY.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE society of Friends, who were in derision called Quakers, because they exhorted their persecutors to fear and tremble at the word of God, appeared in the seventeenth century. At that time there were many in England who were not satisfied with the opinions and forms of worship which were held by the different religious societies then existing. It appeared to them that the life and spirit of Christianity were much wanting, and that many formal obligations, which were connected with the various systems of worship, were introduced and stood in the place of the substance. Hence they may be considered as waiting and looking for some further and more confident ground of faith than they conceived was to be met with among the associated professors of Christianity. George Fox was one of this description: and being early in life awakened to see the sinful state of the world, had many serious considerations excited in his mind; these he cherished, and was gradually brought to understand the nature and design of the Gospel dispensation. It would exceed the bounds allotted to this

work, were I to give the history of this plain but able advocate of vital religion. The reader may be readily acquainted with it by recurring to his own account contained in a journal of his life, which he has left behind him. Early after he came forth in the ministry, many embraced the truth to which he pointed, and a society was formed in England, who were known to each other by the name of Friends.

Many were the persecutions and sufferings to which this community were exposed. An account of them may be read either in Sewel's or Gough's history. A fundamental and primary object in the infancy of the society was to turn the attention of the people from outward forms and dependencies to the light of Christ in themselves. This they confidently maintained was universal; that every man was enlightened by it; and that until the rational creation should conform to it, their claim to true religion had no solid foundation in Christanity. When they became distinguished, many accusations were raised against them, in order to prejudice their religious profession in the view of others. Such accusations were usually met by suitable explanations. In the course of those occurrences, there occasionally appeared reasons for their dissent from others, but as such reasons were spread among con-

troversial writings, no regular system or concentrated profession of their belief had as yet appeared. These circumstances continued until Robert Barclay, enlightened, as we believe, by the light of Christ, discovered the necessity for a remedy; hence he was impressed with a concern to communicate to the world his ideas and judgment of the true Christian principles and doctrines of the infant society, of which he was a member; and accordingly published the work usually known by the name of Barclay's Apology. This book the society of Friends approve. In it the reader may find a full and ample account of their belief concering the Christian religion and the duties which it enjoins. But the Apology being more especially adapted, in some particulars, to the time in which it was written, and also requiring a very attentive examination of all its relations and dependencies, in order fully to comprehend the views of its author; it is therefore a work which we have reason to believe is at this day not so frequently and deliberately resorted to as we could wish. Not only strangers to the society of Friends, but many of our young people, it is believed, might be benefited by having a work more concise, and, as far as possible, adapted to the same purpose. Under these considerations I have attempted to

give a summary of our profession. From the nature of the subjects which will be treated upon, some reasonings may be expected; but generally the plan will be to state the belief of the society, and to show the correspondence of such belief with the meaning and doctrine of the holy Scriptures. The author will not be confined from occasionally entering upon controverted points, and that because he believes it will be unavoidable. The society of Friends are known to differ in their profession, in various particulars, from others; and in stating to others their doctrines and belief, he will necessarily have to show, in some instances, the reasons for such difference. This will be done not with a view to oppose any class of Christian professors, but wholly in conformity with the nature of the task he has undertaken.

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A

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THE CHRISTIAN'S BELIEF.

THE society of Friends believe that the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, and expected by the Jews, did, in the fulness of time, appear; that Jesus Christ, the son of God, born of the virgin Mary, was and is this promised Messiah; the same concerning whom the four evangelists have given testimony, and who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, under the sentence of Pontius Pilate; and that he rose again, agreeably to the Scriptures. That he died for, and in consequence of the sins of mankind; that in his death was an offering for the sins of the whole world; and that he is

the only mediator between God and man. They also believe in the necessity of obedience to his doctrines, as contained in the holy Scriptures; and that the holy Scriptures were written under the direction of the spirit of Christ, and can only be understood by those who live in obedience to the same.

Man is a free agent, and the means of salvation are universal.

Although we believe in the doctrine of free will, we by no means deny the decrees of the Almighty; but acknowledge that these are fixed and unalterable. As for instance, he has decreed that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. That is, that no man can know the things of God but by the spirit of God. Our free will, therefore, we hold to be limited by capacity and by consequences; as in the case of Cain, who was assured, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Gen. iv. 7. Here it appears he was free to act, but subject to consequences. Such a freedom as this, we apprehend, is implied

in the very nature of a command; because it is not rational to suppose a command should be given by infinite wisdom where there was not a capacity to obey. But the doctrines of the holy Scriptures are sufficiently clear that commands have been given. Adam was commanded not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Gen. ii. 17. Wheresoever, therefore, a command is given, there we may fairly infer power to obey. Friends believe that the light which shines in every man, and which is offered to him during the day of his visitation, he may obey or disobey; and if this doctrine is well founded, the freedom of the will is thence established. I am aware that in this particular we disagree with those who hold the doctrine of unconditional election. But we cannot believe that if Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, which the holy Scriptures testify, or if he has in one instance offered salvation to a fallen race universally, that he ever afterwards retracted the ground—and yet he must have done so, if the predestinarian doctrine of unconditional decree be true. That he has offered salvation to all, the following Scriptures fully prove. "For so hath

the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts, xiii. 47.

" For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16.

" And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark, xvi. 15.

" For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men." Titus, ii. 11.

An unprejudiced consideration of these passages, we are of opinion, might satisfy every man that God is no respecter of persons. This was the judgment of Peter, when at the house of Cornelius; and it is worthy of remark, that in his more infant stage of the ministry he was differently minded, because he was under the prejudice of education. He thought he had reason to believe that salvation was confined by immutable decree to the Jews. Now he finds it governed by conditions. And so also we believe, " That of a truth God is no respecter of persons.

but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Acts, x. 34, and 35. "For there is no respect of persons with God." Rom. ii. 11.

With our opinion of free will we nevertheless connect the dependency of man. We do not say, as some have supposed, that there is in us, or in any others, a natural light or means of salvation. But otherwise that, "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above," Jam. i. 17. and has the Lord only for its author and giver. And therefore all the light in man is an effect of his own divine power, and cannot be attributed to any inferior cause. On this subject we profess, according to the Scriptures, that God has made the means of salvation universal. To support which we refer to the following passages, among many others which might be chosen. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." Mat. iv. 16. "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Luke, ii. 30, 31, 32. "That

was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "Then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." 1 John, i. 9, and viii. 12. If we may believe the foregoing, then Jesus is the light of the world and all are enlightened by him. All may follow him, and enjoy the light of life. This we confidently believe and teach; and therefore reject, as erroneous and contrary to the Scriptures, all those doctrines which deny the freedom of man in the sense above given, or which hold out a partiality on the part of a just and righteous God, in his administration of the means of salvation and restoration to a fallen world. The reader will perceive that I have connected the doctrine of universal means of salvation, with what I have offered concerning the free will of man; and that having closed the subject with those two points in connection, it will not be necessary to say much upon the belief of Friends respecting the universal offer of salvation. This however, is the doctrine they teach and believe, and have no doubt it is founded upon the pro-

fession of all the apostles, and true believers in Christ. A doctrine sufficiently set forth in the passages already quoted from the holy Scriptures.

DIVINE REVELATION, THE GROUND AND PRINCIPLE FROM WHICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS TO BE OBTAINED. THOSE WHO COME TO FIND THIS PRINCIPLE, WHICH IS OFFERED TO ALL, MAY AFTERWARDS FALL FROM IT.

AND first, the true knowledge of God, we believe, cannot be obtained by any outward means. God is a spirit, and cannot be known but by a spiritual and divine manifestation opened in the soul: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son revealeth him." Matt. xi. 27. From which it appears, that though there may be some idea of God excited by tradition, and seated in the mind of the natural man, yet that this idea or knowledge is not the true and saving knowledge, not that living and spiritual knowledge which Christ described, as recorded by the evangelist John, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus

Christ, whom thou hast sent." John, xvii. 3. Friends believe, that according to the Scriptures, God in his love and mercy, has granted a spiritual manifestation to all, by which they may come to this living experimental knowledge of him. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, iii. 16. And the same apostle has said of the Son, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." John, i. 4, 5. That this same light, "was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John, i. 9. But if any were not furnished with it, then the doctrine of the apostle would not be correct. This divine life of the Spirit by which we come to the knowledge of God, is the only means which can open in the soul that saving knowledge. Therefore we believe that it is the great principle by which the secrets of God and man are opened, "For the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. x. By this quickening principle man

is brought into a capacity to understand those things which pertain to life and salvation. " But the things of God, knoweth no man, but the spirit of God;" 1 Cor. ii. 11. A manifestation whereof, " is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7. When we speak of revelation we mean this same divine spirit; and we do not believe that any man ever came to the knowledge of God without it. And as they who live in the spirit and walk in it, are in the unity and fellowship of the truth, and enjoy that life by which the true knowledge of God is made manifest, so those who are enemies to the truth, though the light of it shine in them, are in darkness and spiritual death, and do not come to the light which is offered for their instruction. But in such is fulfilled what John the evangelist has written, " And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John, iii. 19. It appears therefore that those who walk in the light, according to the Scriptures, are children of the light, and of the day. They are not merely traditional believers in God, but have come to the living knowledge of

him. We do not agree with those who hold that when this divine life is witnessed or raised in the soul, such can never afterwards fall from the grace of God; because we are satisfied that the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. Paul was aware of the danger of falling from grace. "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away." 1 Cor. ix. 27. Again, speaking to his son Timothy, he says, "holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." 1 Tim. i. 19. Many other passages might be quoted agreeing with the foregoing, but what is already advanced may be sufficient.

CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES.

THE society of Friends do not agree with those professors of christianity, who say the Scriptures are the word of God; but they are of the judgment that the testimonies of the holy Scriptures proceeded from, and were written under the guidance of the word

or spirit of God: that they are as Paul expresses, "Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. iii. 16. But as they had an original spring or principle from whence they proceeded, so that principle we consider as a primary cause, and the holy Scriptures the effect. To that original principle which was before the Scriptures, we with John the evangelist, give the name of the Word, and not to the Scriptures. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John, i. 1. There are important reasons for making this distinction; some of which it may not be improper to mention. The Word of God as described by the evangelist John, we believe has an universal influence, which cannot be admitted in relation to the Scriptures. But if the Scriptures are the alone means of salvation, then they must contradict themselves; because they testify, that "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." Rev. vii. 9. We cannot doubt but that of this

great company there were many who had never read the Scriptures; but they were, notwithstanding, clothed with the robes of righteousness. Hence we infer, that though the Scriptures are a great blessing to us, yet they are not so much so as that Word or Spirit from whence they proceeded. But the scriptures themselves cannot be understood, without the aid of the same spirit, by which they were at first written. We consequently believe that in the wisdom of God, many souls are instructed without the means of the Scriptures, by the immediate manifestation of his own blessed spirit; If therefore we call the Scriptures the word of God, and say they are the only means of salvation; this would go to deny the doctrine which they contain, and exclude all those who cannot read them, from the possibility of salvation. The society of Friends observing these consequences, and finding that the spirit of truth is given to lead into all truth, and of course, out of all error, cannot join with those who after this manner depart from the doctrine of the Scriptures, but they on the contrary refuse to call the Scriptures by any other name than that which they claim for themselves.

OF THE MINISTRY.

"IF any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified." 1 Peter, iv. 11. Such ministry is not the effect of man's will or wisdom, but is the ministry of the spirit. Now the gospel dispensation, is a spiritual dispensation, and all those who profess to be ministers of the gospel, if they are really such, have received a gift of the spirit for that purpose. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ." Eph. xv. 12. We believe therefore that no human talents or learning can qualify a man without this gift, to be a gospel minister. And no one can be assured that he has this gift of the spirit for the work of the ministry, but by the immediate impression and evidence of the spirit itself. Nor can those among whom he labours know that the gift has been bestowed, unless they also have the evidence of the same spirit. The

church of Christ was to be under his government, and built upon him, the only true foundation; consequently its members were not left to any uncertainty: they had the spirit of Christ; for according to the Scriptures, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9. The true church therefore consisting of living members influenced by the holy Head, they necessarily know when the ministry proceeds from the spirit. And although it may be possible for human learning and parts to become very correct in the knowledge of the letter; yet the ministry of the spirit not accompanying the letter, these only are ministers of death, and never can rise any higher, unless they receive the gift of the ministry. This gift we believe is only at the disposal of him from whom all perfect gifts proceeds; and not in the power of any man or set of men to confer upon another. We believe also that the gift of the spirit is not confined to nation or sex; that it is bestowed upon all; and that the gift of the ministry is bestowed upon females as well as males. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, for as many of you

as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ." Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28. If then we are, when baptized into Christ, all one in him (and we believe no one can be a minister of Christ until baptized unto him,) whether male or female, we all receive of his spirit; and those whom it may please him to put into the ministry will be to the edification of the body of Christ, which is his church. That females were to receive the gift of prophecy appears from the following: " I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy." Joel, ii. 28. The apostle Peter on the memorable day of Pentecost makes use of this same passage, confirming the right of prophecy to the female sex. And though Paul for the purpose of guarding the church in his day from unnecessary questions and a consequent disturbance of the solemnity, enjoined that a woman should not be suffered to speak in it, but should inquire of her husband at home; yet it appears plain that he had no view to forbid them the right to

minister when they should be thereunto called; for we find he has instructed them in what manner they should appear. "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head." 1 Cor. xi. 5. He has also spoken by way of approbation of women in the ministry of the gospel: "And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also and with other my fellow labourers whose names are in the book of life." Philip. iv. 3. The society of Friends being satisfied that females were called to the ministry amongst them, and having every necessary assurance that it was agreeable to the wise administration of the Head of the church, have not believed that they should be excluded, but own them in the ministry, and are often edified by their labours in the gospel. One of the duties which we are satisfied is vested in the church, is a careful attention to this subject. Those who have had experience and have long stood firm in obedience to the spirit of Christ, are necessarily bound to take notice of appearances in the ministry; and where any come forth who have mista-

ken their gift, timely to counsel and caution them. Thus the living members are instrumental to preserve all in their proper places; instructing one another in the opening of that light which makes manifest. But though we are satisfied that male and female are called to the ministry; we do not believe they are to be paid for their labours, or to preach by contract. But agreeably to the charge of Christ to his disciples. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. x. 1. We cannot therefore own any in the ministry who disobey this command of Christ. But as it was the duty of the church in the primitive day to give to the poor amongst them, so we believe we are also in duty bound to provide for our poor, as well ministers as others. Although we esteem a living and authorized ministry, and believe it is a blessing to the church, yet as we consider all true ministers to be the servants of Christ, who only can render effectual their services, so we are satisfied that they must necessarily wait for his instruction in every step they take in this solemn duty. But should any rise and attempt to speak in his name, under the influence or choice of the creaturely

will, we believe such would contribute to their own condemnation, and by no means profit the people. Therefore as we do not unite with those who are hirelings, so neither do we own such to be the ministers of Christ, who profess to be always ready, and who make it their rule to preach at all times when an assembly are gathered.

OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

AS it was the practice of the primitive believers in Christ to meet together for the purpose of worshipping him, so we believe it remains to be a duty enjoined upon all his followers down to the present day. They were formerly instructed on this important occasion and encouraged to believe by the promise of Christ, "that where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. We therefore believe that it is our indispensable duty publicly to assemble ourselves together in order to worship the living God. But our manner of meeting in silence, has

been spoken of as being no where warranted by the example of primitive believers, or the testimony of the holy scriptures. But as the gospel dispensation is purely spiritual, and as no formal acts without the spirit can constitute divine worship; we therefore are satisfied that we ought to wait for the needful qualification to worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and this we believe may be done without the aid of the human voice. For if the worship of God, depended upon the organic powers of our nature, and could not be performed without them, then it must be in part a natural and not purely a spiritual worship. We are informed on this subject, by the Head of the church, that "the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." John, iv. 23, 24. It therefore appears to us that no well founded objection can be raised against our silent meetings; and that the form itself correctly agrees with that kind of worship which christians are called to. And although we

do not deny that the spirit of Christ may sometimes accompany vocal acts of worship, yet we believe many may be deceived by complying with outward forms without the spirit. We confess also that it is possible for an assembly to be gathered into outward silence, and not experience the mind to be separated from the influence of the natural wanderings and desires of the creature. In eith r case, pure and spiritual worship may fail to be performed. But in the former, where an assembly are collected, and without waiting for the mind of the spirit, immediately proceed to outward and formal acts; there appears to us a danger of departing from the will of God, and fulfilling the will of man alone. To wait upon God, requires a state in which we are separated from all the acts of the creature. But such a state is not obtained while any thing of our own commands our attention. Hence we infer that were we to enter our religious assemblies, and pursue the first emotions and ideas, we should be liable to be active in the first nature without the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit; and all such acts, however specious, we believe will fail to be ac-

ceptable to the Father, who is a pure and spiritual being, only known and worshipped in that manifestation of the spirit which he has been pleased to grant to all them that wait upon, and worship him in spirit and in truth. Many are the instances mentioned in the Scriptures of the faithful waiting upon God. The prophet Jeremiah says, "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Lam. iii. 25, 26. David saith, "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." Psa. xl. 1. Isaiah saith, "And it shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah, xxv. 9. One more instance I will add in confirmation of leaning upon and waiting for the aid of the spirit. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groan-

ings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 25, 26. In this doctrine of the apostle, it is evident that he believed in the necessity of waiting in the spirit, and that there was a sensible devotion in the joint influence of the spirit itself, with the soul of man, where words were not necessary or even competent to the occasion. "As there can be nothing more opposite to the natural will and wisdom of man, than this silent waiting upon God; so neither can it be obtained, nor rightly comprehended by man but as he layeth down his own wisdom and will, so as to be content, to be thoroughly subject to God. Therefore it was not preached, nor can it be so practised, but by such as find no outward ceremony, no observations, no words, yea not the best and purest, even the words of Scripture, able to satisfy their weary and afflicted souls. Because where all these may be, the life, power and virtue which make such things effectual may be wanting. Such I say were necessitated to cease from all externals and to be silent before the Lord, and being directed to that inward principle of life, and light in themselves, as the most excellent teacher which can never be removed into a

corner; came thereby to be taught to wait upon God in the measure of life and grace received from him, and to cease from their own forward words and actions, in the natural willing and comprehension, and feel after this inward seed of life, that as it moveth, they may move with it, and be actuated by its power, and influenced whether to pray, preach or sing. And so from this principle of man's being silent and not acting in the things of God of himself, until thus actuated by God's light and grace in the heart, did naturally spring, that manner of sitting together in silence." (*Apology, p.* 353.) "Yet I do not so much commend and speak of silence, as if we had bound ourselves by any law, to exclude praying or preaching, or tied ourselves thereunto, not at all; for as our worship consisteth not in words, so neither in silence, but in an holy dependence of the mind upon God, from which dependence, silence necessarily follows in the first place until words can be brought forth, which are from God's spirit." (*Apology. p.* 360.) The reader will from the foregoing have some idea of our reasons for assembling in silence; but they only can be competent to judge in this weigh-

ty matter who have come to the light of Christ in themselves, and are sensible of those joys, which spring from an inward and spiritual knowledge of his presence. Friends believe that all true worshippers in spirit and in truth, must walk in the spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Neither are we alone in our belief, that divine worship is a spiritual act and to be known and performed in silence. "Devotion, considered in itself, is an intercourse between God and us, between the Supreme, Self Existent, Inconceivable Spirit; which formed and preserves the universe, and that particular Spirit, with which, for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of matter on earth, that we call man. It is a silent act in which the soul divests itself of outward things, flies into heaven and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt or pleasure, into the bosom of an Almighty Friend. True devotion doubtless requires a considerable degree of abstraction from the world; that we hear little of it is not wonderful. It makes no noise in the circle of the learned, or of the elegant. Under a heap of worldly care, we smother the lovely infant, and will

not let it breathe. Vanity, ambition, avarice quench the celestial fire, and these alas. are too much the god of mortals. Writers have been amusing us only with shadows of this piety, instead of giving us its soul and substance. Superstition has placed it in opinions, ceremonies, austerities, pilgrimages, an august temple, or splendid imagery, which has little connection with sentiment or spirit. Enthusiasm has swelled with unnatural conceptions, and obtruded a spurious offspring on the world instead of this engaging child of reason and truth; whilst the lukewarm have rested in a few outward duties which have had no vigour, and as they spring not from the heart, never entered the temple of the Most High. Real piety is of a very different, and of a much more animated nature; it looks up to God, sees, hears, feels him in every event; in every vicissitude, in all places, in all seasons, and upon all occasions. It is theory verified by experience, it is faith substantiated by mental enjoyment, it is heaven transplanted into the human bosom; it is the radiance of the Divinity, warming and encircling man. It is a spiritual sense gratified by spiritual sensa-

tions; without this, all ceremonies are inefficacious, books, prayers, sacraments, and meditations, are but a body without a soul, or a statue without animation. That man is capable of such an intercourse with his Maker, there are many living witnesses to prove. It may be proved to spring from natural and philosophical causes; God is a spirit, so is the mind; bodies can have intercourse, so can souls. When minds are in an assimilating state of purity, they have union with their Maker. This was the bliss of Paradise; sin interrupted, and holiness must restore it; to a soul thus disposed, the Creator communicates himself in a manner, which is as insensible to the natural eye, as the falling of dews; but not less refreshing to its secret powers than that is to vegetation. The primitive saints are described thus, when they speak of their transports. David felt it when he longed for God, as the hart panteth after the water brooks. St. Paul, when he gloried in his tribulations. It was embodied in him when he was carried up into the third heaven, and heard things impossible to be uttered. St. Stephen was filled with it, when he saw the heavens

open, and prayed for his murderers. By it martyrs were supported when they were stoned, and sawed asunder, and till we feel it in ourselves, we shall never fully know how glorious the Lord is." London Review, December 1791. " It follows, (says the learned Howe,) that having formed this his more excellent creature, according to his more express likeness, stampt it with the more glorious character of his living image, given it a nature suitable to his own, and thereby made it capable of rational and intelligent converse with him, he hath it even in his power to maintain a continual converse with this creature by agreeable communications, by letting in upon it the vital beams and influence of his own light and love, and receiving back the return of its grateful acknowledgments and praises, wherein it is manifest he should do no greater thing than he hath done. For who sees not that it is a matter of no greater difficulty to converse with, than to make a reasonable creature? Or who would not be ashamed to deny, that he who hath been the only Author of the soul of man, and of the excellent powers and faculties belonging to it; can more easily sus-

tain that which he hath made, and converse with his creature suitably to the way wherein he hath made it capable of his converse." The memorable John Hales, in his Golden Remains, expresses himself thus, on the subject of spiritual worship. "Nay one thing I know more, that the prayer, which is the most forcible, transcends and far exceeds all the power of words. For St. Paul, speaking unto us of the most effectual kind of prayer, calls it sighs and groans, that cannot be expressed. Nothing cries so loud in the ears of God, as the sighing of a contrite and earnest heart." From all which, and many other testimonies which might be produced, it must be evident that a spiritual devotion is believed in, and has been acknowledged by others as well as the society of Friends. Although this divine and spiritual devotion may be experienced when our hands are employed in the business of this world, and we doubt not many pious souls are poured out before God in secret, by gratefully owning his mercy and his grace, yet we are satisfied that such will be glad often to assemble themselves together, that they may unite in spirit in this duty. And we have often had ex-

perience that it is acceptable to our holy Head, that we meet together to wait upon and worship him. He has owned our silent and solemn assemblies, and in them united us in the fellowship of his dear Son. Therefore we believe that is our indispensable duty, and that they who sincerely attend to it will know the promise fulfilled, "Even the youths shall faint, and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." Isa. xl. 30, 31. Therefore, we are concerned, to practice the exhortation of the apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Heb. x. 25. But concerning those who think of his name, the prophet Malachi has said, "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance

was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day, when I will make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Mal. iii. 16, 17.

OF PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL SINGING TO THE LORD.

HAVING given an account of our belief concerning the spirituality of worship, I shall now speak of prayer; which, though it is a part of the worship of God, and not to be dispensed with by the christian, appears to me, cannot be acceptable, when performed in the will or wisdom of man. But prayer, performed by direction of the Divine Spirit, is profitable, and should not be neglected. The disciples, sensible of this, applied to the only proper instructor; and we believe that they who at this day apply to him, will be rightly directed in this solemn act. That others who have their forms of prayer committed to memory, and are formal in the act, not knowing the instruction and puttings forth of the Divine Spirit, are not asking in

his name; and therefore will not receive. Perhaps there is scarcely an act sanctioned by the religion of Jesus Christ, less understood, and therefore none more abused than that of prayer. Those who think they are within the meaning of this duty, because they are governed by the boundaries set in the Lord's prayer, are too generally deficient. They do not consider that the very first sentence in that solemn compendium requires a qualification. Who are they that may call God father? Certainly not those who are the servants of sin; who reject the light of Christ, and are enemies to his spirit; these are not his children. "But as many as are led by the spirit of God; they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 14. Such may say, our Father which art in heaven: but of the vast multitude who are daily addressing him by that paternal title, there is reason to doubt, few are his obedient children; and all others are saying that which is not true in relation to themselves. They have not lived in, nor received the spirit of adoption, authorizing them to cry Abba, Father. Neither are the disobedient willing that his kingdom should be set up in their hearts, nor that the divine

will should be done; but they live in the pride and obstinacy of their own self-will. Instead of forgiving men their trespasses, they watch the opportunity for revenge, and are joyful when they succeed in punishing those who they imagine have injured them; and yet some of these are forward to pray in the assemblies of the people; and would willingly persuade men, that they have a claim to true devotion. Others again seem to suppose they shall be heard for their much speaking, and therefore are crowding together all the subjects of desire which the imagination can reach, and calling upon the Almighty to grant them this vast assemblage of requests. If we were to take a correct account of the multitude of petitions, which are vocally offered up, and strictly to examine and reflect upon them; I have sometimes thought there are few of common understanding, but what would be of opinion that many of them were extravagant. This part of devotion, it seems, was practised by the Pharisees of old. Our Lord has taken notice of them, and evidently condemned them and their prayers together. No doubt they had their admirers in that day, as well as many in the present.

But what were the remarks which the Saviour of the world made upon them. "And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hyprocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men; verily I say unto you, they have their reward." Matt. vi. 5. Having shown the motives of these supplicants, and noticed that a primary object with them was to be seen of men; he gives his disciples an instructive lesson on the subject, a lesson which ought to be deeply pondered by all those who think themselves called to vocal prayer, in the assemblies of the people, as well as by those who in their closets attempt to address the Almighty. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." Matt. vii. 8. These cautions are sufficient to prove that though our Lord has invited to prayer, yet he requires that they who pray should know that the motive is pure, that it is free from all creaturely passions and affections,

and therefore he has said for the encouragement of such, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matt. vii. 7. Prayer being thus governed by purity of motive, and offered according to the direction of the spirit, is an acceptable act, and as it is not seeking, or asking in the will of the creature, but in the will of God, so we believe that which he by his spirit puts into the souls of his children to ask, he will certainly grant. The natural man, with all his studied forms of prayer, is ignorant of the spirit; and therefore knows not what to ask for, but is in darkness and spiritual death; and never can pray acceptably until he is brought under the redeeming power of truth, and made subject to the cross of Christ; having the old and fallen nature humbled, by the righteous judgments of God upon it. In this state, the soul is sensible of the need it has of a supply of daily bread, and there is begotten in it a true hunger and thirst after righteousness; the spiritual feelings are quickened and made alive unto God; and all the temptations of the enemy are resisted. In this conflict, the weight of human infirmities is felt, and

prayers are always alive in the soul; hence it may be said of such, agreeably to the exhortation of the apostle Paul, they "pray without ceasing." Now this living travail from under the power of darkness, and the dominion of sin, is not a superficial, or outward business; but it is a work known in the presence of God, and his gracious ear is always open to all the groanings and prayers of those who endure it; because they breathe in his own divine spirit, and live to him, and not to themselves. To such he is pleased to make manifest his will, not only concerning themselves, and the things that are present, but also concerning others, and the things that are to come. Such was the condition of the prophet Elijah, who "prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not upon the earth, by the space of three years, and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James, v. 17, 18. No one can suppose that the dearth here spoken of was separately the effect of the natural will of the prophet; and therefore, in this, we have an instance that true prayer is an entrance into, and concurrence with the di-

vine mind. Hence we believe that it cannot be performed, but only as we are led thereto by the spirit of God; by which the things of God and his will are made manifest.

Now when an assembly are gathered for the purpose of divine worship, and any believe they are called to vocal prayer; many present being led into the will of God; the prayer itself will be owned, and united with by such as being from the dictates of the spirit; but if the person speaking does not keep to the leadings of the spirit, then what is said, is not true prayer, and will not be accepted. If again he is guided in what is said by the spirit of God, then all they of the assembly who are gathered into the divine will are united in the prayer. But in our solemn assemblies there may be different states and different growths, and each may be gathered into the divine will concerning themselves, but owing to their various wants, they may not be led to unite in one petition; though all may be brought into the will of God, and all engaged in spiritual prayer. In this view of prayer, we believe our silent opportunities together must appear really important and adapted to the purposes of spiritual and acceptable wor-

ship. That prayer can only be opened in the understanding, and rightly directed by the divine spirit, there are many passages in the Scriptures to prove. "Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." Rom. viii. 26, 27. Again, the same apostle saith, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also." 1 Cor. xiv. 15. I shall not detain the reader with further quotations from the Scriptures, on this solemn subject. But if the foregoing may be accepted as a correct account of the nature of prayer; then no custom, however it may be sanctioned by multitudes, which is not consistent therewith, merits the name of prayer. That true prayer is of a spiritual nature appears to have been the judgment of others as well as Friends. Dr. Gell, says, "words conceived only in an earthly mind, and uttered out of the memory by man's voice, which make a noise in

the ears of flesh and blood, are not, nor can be accounted a prayer before our Father which is in heaven." Dr. Smaldridge, bishop of Bristol, has the following expressions: "Devotion of mind is itself a silent prayer, which wants not to be clothed in words, that God may better know our desires. He regards not the service of our lips, but the inward disposition of our hearts." Monro speaks to the same effect in his Just Measures of pious Institutions of Youth. "I am persuaded, says he, that it would be vastly advantageous for youth if care were taken to train them up to this method of prayer; that is, if they were taught frequently to place themselves in the Divine presence, and there silently to adore their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. For hereby they would become habitually recollected. Devotion would be their element, and they would know by experience what our blessed Saviour, and his great apostle means, when they enjoin us to pray without ceasing. It was, I suppose, by some such method of devotion as I am now speaking of that Enoch walked with God; that Moses saw Him that is invisible; that the royal psalmist set the Lord al-

ways before him; and that our Lord Jesus himself, continued whole nights in prayer to God. No man, I believe, will imagine, that his prayer, during all the space in which it is said to have continued, was altogether vocal. When he was in his agony in he garden, he used but few words. His vocal prayer then consisted only of one petition, and an act of pure resignation, thrice repeated. But I hope all will allow, that his devotion lasted longer than while he was employed in the uttering of a few sentences." Prayer, therefore, being purely of divine origin, and only brought forth in man by the immediate openings and leadings of the Spirit of God, Friends believe, that all who enter upon it, without such direction and government, are only fulfilling the will of the creature; and though they may repeat the best of words, even the prayer which Christ taught his disciples, it is not prayer to them, nor will it enter the ears of the Most High. As in regard to prayer, we hold that no human acquirements can qualify for it, or in any degree be equal to it; so also we believe with respect to singing of hymns, and spiritual songs. On this subject we differ from many

other psofessors of Christianity; and we have reason to believe that some pious and well disposed professors have not seen how to reconcile our omission of this practice. But the society of Friends do not believe that songs of thanksgiving or praise are, of necessity, vocal. If by the divine Spirit, any are favoured to feel praise to spring in their souls, let them sing their spiritual song in spi rit, where it properly originates; and we doubt not God, who is a spirit, will understand their spiritual song. But we do not see that those inward joys of the soul, at all stand in need of any outward or musical tone, to render them acceptable to God. And though we were sometimes to admit the outward voice to be incorporated with this spiritual impression, yet we are not of the judgment that this would be proper in our religious assemblies, because we are aware that all could not in truth sing the same song; some would be likely to be unqualified. Indeed it could seldom occur, that the whole congregation would be raised into the same spiritual song, and if any should outwardly sing, that which was not inwardly brought forth in them by the spirit

of God, such would be acting contrary to truth, and could not be edified thereby. From this view of the subject we apprehend all those who are not prepared in spirit to sing, had better be silent. And those who are opened in spirit, into the songs of the Lord, let them sing to the Lord in spirit; and not to men, lest they become the instruments of spiritual death to those whom the Lord has not yet given a song; and who according to his righteousness, are yet to pass under the just dispensation of condemnation. But if the whole assembly were born of the spirit, and each of them were in consequence prepared for the true worship of God; we have elsewhere said, that this does not require the aid of the human voice; but being an inward and divine qualification known unto God, because brought forth by him, we are not sensible that it is made any more acceptable, by being proclaimed outwardly in songs to men. And if the outward singing does not add to the spiritual virtue of the thanksgiving or praises, then there is no advantage gained by it. That singing then, which is pleasing to the Almighty, must proceed from that which is pure in the heart,

even from the divine life, and manifestation of the spirit; and all those will, no doubt, as they are moved thereby, have spiritual songs and hymns, to return unto the Lord. But we do not find in the New Testament, any thing to warrant the use of instruments of music, or artificial singing in the worship of God; and being satisfied that he is and may be worshipped in spirit, and in truth, we leave all those outward acts, which are often attended with danger to the cause of sincerity, out of our practice. According to the usual method of those, who unite with vocal singing, a psalm is offered to the assembly, and then they join in singing the same. But let us, for the sake of further understanding the subject, suppose the following is to be sung: "I am weary with my groaning, all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." Psal. vi. 6. It must be evident, that those only could sing this psalm, who had been in the same state; all others would be singing that which they had not known. And thus it must be in every instance, where any join in the songs of the faithful, who have not themselves been faithful. We, therefore, believe,

that as the worship we are called to is of divine original, there is no mistake in its operations; but all the living, may harmonize together in the same spirit, and worship God, "according as he has dealt, to every man, the measure of faith." Rom. xii. 3. Nor do we believe the rebellious, and enemies to the truth, can join, while they remain in that state, in the true and spiritual worship. But we know they may unite their voices, where an outward form of worship is embraced; and such may even suppose they are doing God service. The society of Friends are therefore satisfied with their silent and spiritual meetings, and abundantly prefer them to any formal mode of worship, which is outward, and not according to the leadings and manifestations of the divine spirit. From what has been said, the reader will observe, that we are by profession bound to wait for the calls and direction of the spirit, and not to proceed to preaching, praying, or singing in our solemn meetings, unless we are thereunto led; and that in the two last cases there may be many engaged according to their different wants and growths, even at the same time, and in the same as-

sembly; which would not be the case, if all were called to join in the same form, either of prayer, or of singing. We therefore believe, that we are called upon to hold up a testimony against all those performances, in the solemn act of worship, which are entered upon, in the will, wisdom, and time of man, and to exalt by precept and example, our testimony, to the spirituality of the gospel dispensation: well knowing that it is a dispensation, in which the substance is to be enjoyed in the spirit and life of the dear Son of God; who is building up a spiritual church, founded upon him in all things.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH.

ON the doctrine of faith, we say with the apostle, that "without faith, it is impossible to please God." But by faith, we do not mean a confession to any particular form of opinions; because this would be possible to those who are in many respects reprobate concerning the faith in Christ. Neither are we of the judgment, that our "faith should stand in the wisdom of man, but in the pow-

er of God." 1 Cor. ii. 5. Therefore, we believe, that the faith of a true disciple of Christ, is in a living principle, a divine and heavenly spirit; which no human means can beget in us; but which is the immediate manifestation of the eternal power and word of God. Wherefore, we conclude with the apostle Paul, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x. 17. This word, we believe to be the same which was in the beginning, which Moses spoke of, and which Paul adverts to and says, "Is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. That is the word of faith, which we preach." Rom. x. 8. Those therefore, who believe in this inward manifestation of the word, and have their spiritual ear open to hear, have come to embrace the proper object of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. To such, faith is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for. They are in the true and spiritual sense the children of faithful Abraham, walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing. This is that faith by which the elders obtained a good report, and concerning which so much is said in the holy Scriptures. Every

one, therefore, whose spiritual ear is open to this manifestation of the spirit, or word of faith, is no longer trusting to the natural understanding, but living subject to the divine mind, and thereby overcoming the world. Until we have come to this living principle, this light and life of the spirit, the soul remains subject to the fallen nature, and cannot serve God acceptably, or be united to him. But we believe that this great principle of faith is offered to all men, and that those of every description who come to trust in it, and be led by it, will be raised from under the dominion of fallen nature, and united by faith to the general assembly of the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. Wheresoever this living faith is, there will be the works corresponding with it. But a faith that is without works is not of divine origin. "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered his son Isaac upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" James, ii. 21, 22. When the soul of man is brought to lean upon this divine manifestation of the spirit, then there is no

longer a submission to evil, but all the powers of temptation are laid open, and the transgressing nature in man is brought to light, and judgment is passed upon it. These are they, who walk in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, and "who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter, i. 5. From the foregoing, it will appear that Friends consider it possible, for a man to acknowledge that he believes in the moral excellency of the doctrines of the Scriptures, and subscribe formally to many truths of the gospel; he may even fulfil the works of the law, and regard all the outward duties of religion, but fail at last to have that faith by which the promise was to be inherited, and by which the strong will of the creature is kept in subjection to the Creator. For in whomsoever this word of faith is brought forth, and made the governing principle, in such the will and pride of the creature is brought down; they act not from motives of human kind, nor are they soliciting human approbation: but they seek that honour which comes from God only, and therefore they believe, to the saving of

the soul. Such do not stumble at the cross of Christ, nor confer with flesh and blood; but however singular they may appear among men, they, like Paul, are obedient to the heavenly vision.

OF SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION.

IT is when we have submitted to the manifestation of the spirit, and have come in consequence to possess the true and living faith, which is before spoken of, that the society of Friends believe we are justified. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified." Acts, xiii. 38, 39. But justification cannot be without sanctification, nor sanctification without obedience, nor obedience without faith. Therefore, as true faith is always connected with obedience, "we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;" Rom. iii. 28. that is, whether he is acquainted with the outward obligations contained in the law or otherwise. By faith in the law of the spirit, and obedience thereunto, he will be so

strengthened and instructed, as to fulfil the law, and even be justified by the law, though he act not from an outward knowledge of it, but from the word of faith alone. But justification, we have said, is not without sanctification. The reader will observe, that the two terms are of themselves, when applied to man, not definite; that is, a man may be sanctified in part, and justified in part. And we believe that he is only justified in the same proportion or degree that he is sanctified: consequently, that entire justification must be because of entire sanctification; and such a state of perfect sanctification, we believe to be an effect produced by perfect obedience to the manifestation of the spirit of Christ. But those who act from a respect to the law, as it is outward, may do so from a principle of self-love, and may obtain the outward justification of the law, and be highly esteemed among men, and at the same time not obtain that justification which is of faith, but even be enemies to the cross of Christ, standing in the pride of the creature, and in that wisdom which is foolishness with God. Therefore the apostle has said, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his

sight." Rom. iii. 20. "But being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1, 2. That is, we are not possessed of any merit of our own, by which we can come of ourselves to this grace, but are sinful and fallen creatures in our natural state, without power to make reconciliation with God. And therefore our freedom from the sins that are past, is proposed and offered to us by the imputative righteousness of Christ supplying for us what our past was lacking, on condition of our obedience to the manifestation of his spirit; but in no case applied for our benefit, while we continue to refuse to walk in his light. I have spoken of sanctification as going before justification. We believe when any one is awakened by the power and spirit of Christ and brought to see his fallen and sinful state, that there is, if I may so speak, a provisional justification for him; by which he is introduced so far into the favour of the Almighty as to receive the opportunity of forgiveness of sins that are past, and stand acquitted from them

by the atonement of Christ, on condition that he accept the offered dispensation of repentance; from which will follow, in the progress of the soul in obedience to Christ, sanctification, and a consequent justification. In this view the apostle places the case. "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 11. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, and that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4.

THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION.

THE doctrine of perfection appears to me to follow next in course after sanctification and justification. Friends believe that a state of perfection in this life is enjoined in as positive a manner as any other obligation whatever. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48. If this plain and positive command of Christ be rightly understood, we shall find that it must be taken in connexion with other considerations which he has communicated. We are told, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." John, xv. 5. We may therefore consider the doctrine of perfection under this figure: as though our Lord had said that as the branch of the vine is perfect, according to its kind, in consequence of the order of nature, by being in connexion with the vine, so also shall ye be if ye abide in me. But unless ye abide in me, there is in your case a deficiency, and that order which only is perfect is broken, in which state ye cannot be perfect. But the

perfection which I have called you to, is entirely possible on my principle: and this you must believe, if you can believe that your Father which is in heaven is perfect; you have a proof of his perfection in all his works; and I have told you plainly that as the branch and vine are perfect in consequence of their connexion, so when ye are sustained and live in the same spirit, you will be as perfect in your order, as I am in mine. But as the branch would be imperfect, and fail to bring forth fruit if it abode not in the vine, so also you will fail, if you abide not in me. We have sufficient evidence in favour of the doctrine of perfection, not only from the command of Christ to his disciples, which ought to be conclusive, but also from the doctrine which was common and held forth in the primitive church. Paul has said, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect." 1 Cor. ii. 6. If the apostle did not believe that there were those in his day, who had come to this state, we cannot suppose the above sentence would have been offered. But this is far from being the only case in which the idea of perfection is spoken of. "Be perfect, be of good comfort,"

&c. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. is mentioned by the same apostle elsewhere. And again, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. iv. 13. "Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Phil. iii. 15. "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Col. i. 28. And on this subject the apostle James has said, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," James, i. 4. The foregoing evidently proves that the doctrine of perfection was not only enjoined by Christ upon all his followers, but also believed in and taught by his faithful servants in the primitive church. But whatever may be the objections raised against it at this day, or against the society of Friends for holding it up as indispensable, we cannot believe that Christianity is maintained according to the fulness of its own obligations by those who reject it. Why any should stumble at this profession, it is difficult to conceive; because a doubt of the possibility of perfec-

tion, must imply unbelief in the all-sufficiency of the means, which God in his mercy has offered, for the restoration and salvation of man; since it must be evident that we are not to be permitted an inheritance in the kingdom of God, unless we are first made pure; doubtless that which is pure is perfect, and the perfection which is required is altogether included in the fulfilment of those commands which are given, and which, as has been before advanced, must be possible. If we take a view of this doctrine, in relation to the will of the Almighty, it must appear that he wills our perfect redemption, and consequent separation from all transgression. This is manifested by every mark of his love to his creature man; but in no instance more so than in that of sending his beloved Son; or as the evangelist John informs us, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John, iii. 16. And to the same effect has Paul spoken. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Many other passages might

be instanced to show the love of God to man. All this manifestation of his love must be to no purpose, if we are not put into a capacity to comply with his will, and that his will is that we should be made perfect, I hope will not be denied; since the command to be so, has no less authority than that of his beloved Son. But the perfection of man, though it appears to us to correspond with the divine mind, we do not believe is attainable by any power of our own; it is a state which can only be produced by the submission of our will in all things to the will of God. And we believe that though it is not in us, as transgressing and fallen creatures, to come of ourselves to God, and thus to submit to him, yet we doubt not, that when by a sense of his love we are drawn to him, and through the atonement of his dear Son, our sins are forgiven, because we have passed through the dispensation of repentance, that it is possible to be so allied in love to God as to let go all improper love for other objects, and thus to know a triumph by the power of his spirit over the transgressing nature. Therefore we believe that the souls of these are so separated from every fallen influence as to stand

in the perfect obedience of Christ. That they are united as branches to him, the true and living vine, and partake of that perfect nature which the wise God will approve and accept. Such know as Paul has said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. viii. 15, 16. Being thus begotten anew by the power of God, they are perfect children of the light and of the day, in whom, through obedience to the will of their heavenly Father, victory is gained over all the powers of darkness.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

IN relation to this subject, we resort, as in other cases, to the doctrine of the Scriptures. Our belief in them, I have already said, is confirmed by the concurrent evidence of the Spirit of Truth; without which we apprehend no one can be a true believer, but only led to a traditional and implicit belief. Concerning rewards and punishments, it is

very clear that the Saviour of men has taught this doctrine; and with it may be connected the belief of immortality, and the resurrection both of the just and the unjust. "And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also un-

to them on his left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Mat. xxv. 32 to 42. Many other passages might be taken to prove that rewards and punishments are the manifest doctrines of Jesus Christ, and as certainly as we believe him to be the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, a quickening spirit, the judge of quick and dead, so certainly we profess to believe in and teach this doctrine. But to know the terrors of the Lord for sin, to be humbled under the power of his mighty hand, and really to experience the weight of the dispensation of condemnation, is the most effectual convincement, that the transgressor is absolutely and positively separated from the love and favour of his Lord; and we believe that this has been the humbling dispensation by which many have been brought to believe in the doctrine of rewards and punishments; and to be awfully convinced that if the soul departed out of time in this dark and desperate state, it would be without any qualification for happiness. But though we are satisfied, according to the Scriptures, that if we die in our sins, where our Lord is we cannot come, yet we are also satisfied that his tender mercy

waits long for transgressing mortals, and his calls of kindness are in many ways communicated to them, to repent, return and live. But if all these are rejected, and men harden the heart and stiffen the neck, and will none of his reproof, then the awful moment we believe will come when it will be said, "depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; and let him that is filthy, be filthy still." Whilst I have been stating the doctrine of Christianity, and the profession of the society on this very serious subject, my soul is moved within me by a renewed remembrance of the wormwood and the gall; by a fresh sense of the awful impression which I have experienced under the righteous judgments of God, for the sins of my youth. And though it may be a digression from the subject, I will here express the tender solicitude I feel, that none may quench the spirit, or evade the holy discipline of the cross of Christ; lest they finally fall, never to rise again into the privilege of salvation. I have before stated, that with the doctrine of rewards and punishments is connected that of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection both of the just and the unjust. Such

a resurrection the society of Friends believe in, according to the Scriptures. I have often marvelled why any discussion or ground of dispute should exist upon this subject; and yet it is one about which much has been said. Here also we resort to the doctrine of the Scriptures, and are satisfied with what we apprehend they teach in the case. Paul has said on this subject, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also in the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 40 to 45. And again, in the same chapter, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." 50. And again, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on im-

mortality." 53, 54. One more passage I shall offer from the Scriptures on this subject, and afterwards leave the reader to his own conclusions. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccl. xii. 7.

DAYS AND TIMES.

IT is the practice of Friends to unite with other professors of Christianity in setting apart one day in seven for the purpose of divine worship; and they have no doubt of the propriety of it. Under the legal dispensation we observe that it was a divine ordinance, and that the Jews were strictly enjoined to regard it. But when the Messiah came, it is very evident that he had a view to excite new and more important considerations about the observance of days: and finding the Pharisees and others very particular, and even superstitious on this subject, he saw occasion frequently to put them upon trial; the first circumstance I shall notice of this is the following. "And it came to pass that he went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day, and his disciples began

as they went to pluck the ears of corn." This circumstance, it appears, did not escape the notice of the Pharisees, who thereupon immediately were willing to find fault with them, and put them in mind of the law. "Behold, why do thy disciples on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" Whereupon they were informed, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark, ii. 23, 24, 27, 28. And as the Saviour did not join the Pharisees in a rebuke of his disciples, we may fairly infer that he had an objection to a superstitious observance of days and times. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." Rom. xiv. 5, 6. Such we observe was the liberality of that eminent minister of Christ, the apostle Paul, on the subject of days and times; but I do not mean from thence to infer that he was opposed to the devotion of a day to sacred purposes. It is doubtless expedient for the professors of

Christianity to separate themselves at least one day in seven from worldly business. Yet that he who created time made it all equally good, and that the bare formal cessation from labour on the first day of the week, though outwardly expedient, and even an accommodation in civil society, is by no means sufficient; and therefore, unless we regard the day to the Lord, we do not regard it. He that searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, and showeth unto men what their thoughts are, is often more dishonoured on that day than in all the other days of the week. But as I have before observed, I am satisfied there is no particular holiness attached to one day more than another; yet if we were to lay aside the practice of setting apart one day in seven, no doubt the cause of religion would suffer by it. The society therefore, although they do not believe that one day has any sacred preference to another, have never departed from the practice of other professors in regard to the first day of the week. As it respects days and times appointed for prayers, fasting, &c. though they believe that the Christian should live in the spirit of prayer, they cannot make appointments for

this purpose, or join with those who do. Nor have they consecrated days in reverence to any particular occasion or person: well knowing that it is not the devotion of particular times, but the obedience of the whole heart to the will of God, which Christianity calls for; and that not one, but every day that a gracious Creator may grant to them. It appears that Paul was afraid of some of the time-servers in his day; "But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11.

WATER BAPTISM.

FRIENDS do not believe that water baptism, under any of the forms of administration adopted by the various professors of Christianity, is enjoined by any thing said upon the subject in the Scriptures of truth. But because they have rejected it, and held that it belonged to a dispensation inferior to

the Gospel, some have been so uncharitable as to deny that they were Christians. When I have taken a serious view of the doctrine of water baptism, and admitted, for the sake of examination, that it was necessary, I have always stumbled at the consequences which must connect with such a belief. If, for instance, we say that a soul cannot be saved unless the body of the person is dipped in water, or sprinkled by another, then the consequence must be, that the grace of God, or manifestation of the spirit, is not a sufficient means for salvation; that even the Almighty cannot perfect the salvation of man, without the aid of one of his creatures to sprinkle or dip the person to be saved. This I could never admit, and yet it must be admitted if there is no salvation without. But there is, and has been salvation without it; for no one can believe that the innumerable company which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, which stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, &c. were all baptized with water; yet if one of them was saved without, then salvation is possible without water baptism. But it is

even probable that water baptism was not so much as heard of by many of them. The foregoing considerations on the subject were sufficient to satisfy me that this baptism was not a divine ordinance, intended to be necessary, or entailed upon the church of Christ. But lest however it should be thought that this is not a sufficient inquiry into the subject, I will pursue it further. John the Baptist was sent to baptize with water unto repentance. But it does not appear to us that his dispensation or service ever extended to the opening of the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ: this we believe remained to be separately reserved as the work of the spirit. And we apprehend we are authorized to hold this belief, because there is no evidence that any after John were commanded to practice the baptism of water. We find no proof that the ministration of John the Baptist was to be continued in the Christian church. And we doubt not but that every soul which is brought under the baptism of the spirit of Christ, and abides the refining operation of it, will be saved whether baptized with water or not; and therefore we believe that the only baptism which is sav-

ing, is the baptism of the spirit. Those who think otherwise, and can reconcile all the consequences of their watery baptism, must be left until they may be favoured to see their way out of it. It is however desirable that when they have fulfilled this form, they may not sit down contented, and suppose the work of the soul's salvation is accomplished. For this I believe is a consequence which is very liable to attend all those who are dwelling on the fulfilment of outward ordinances: and such appears to have been the judgment of the apostle Paul. "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11. I might add many other passages from the Scriptures, to show that a dependence upon outward means for salvation was disapproved of by the faithful.

In order more fully to state the ground on which the society of Friends refuse to own water baptism, I may observe, that a main

pillar in the profession of Friends, is that the grace of God, which has appeared unto all men, is all-sufficient for salvation. But if water baptism be indispensable, then is this grace or manifestation of the spirit not sufficient: and it ought to be said that by the baptism of water, and the gift of the holy spirit, man only can be saved; and that though a soul experience the refining power of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, yet unless the body experience the influence of water baptism, there is no salvation possible. Should the latter be insisted upon, it will be necessary to resort to the Scriptures for proof. But though John baptized with water unto repentance, we do not find that he has in one instance held out that his baptism was sufficient; but he points to Christ, as the all-sufficient baptizer. And it appears that for this end he was raised up and qualified; not as the advocates for water baptism suppose, to establish an outward ordinance in the Christian church; but to point to him, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. And thus he is spoken of by the prophet: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah, xl. 3. To this end he came, turning the Jews from their desert and wilderness state to Christ, the Son of God. The prophet has, in this summary of the character and mission of John the Baptist, held up no system to be established by him; neither has he shown any connexion in the mission of this prophet and Christ; but simply that the former was a preparatory messenger to the Jews; a kind of outward witness which a merciful God condescended to give them of the Messiah: that as they were told by the same prophet that Christ should come, so they might have in evidence, his forerunner to prepare them, to let go their confidence in the desert and wilderness of ceremony, and be by him turned to Christ, the Lamb of God, who only can take away the sin of the world. To this end we believe John the Baptist came. The prophet Malachi has spoken of him more particularly by name. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Mal. iv. 5. But neither does he attribute to him the authority to set up or establish any system or ordinance in the

church, or clothe this forerunner with power to administer any part of the means of salvation; and the evangelist Luke, who refers to this prophet, explains this Elijah to mean a messenger in the spirit and power of Elias; the same that the Jews expected, and ought, upon their own principles, to have received, in evidence to the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning Christ: but neither has the evangelist given him any office in the church, but considered him simply in the light of a witness to the Messiah; and Luke professes to state the declaration of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, concerning the mission or service of this forerunner of Christ. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke, i. 16, 17. Now, inasmuch as he was to go before, and be, as the evangelist John has said, "a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the

true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John, i. 7, 8, 9. We cannot infer from thence, or from all the testimony combined, that his office was to establish any system, or enjoin any ordinances, upon those who might believe his testimony. But he was clearly a messenger under the law, pointing to the Jews, and informing them of a more glorious dispensation, about to be ushered in. Accordingly we find that when they sent messengers to him, saying, "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" he immediately informs them of Christ, saying, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." John, i. 25, 26, 27, 29. And the next day he informs them again of Jesus, and calls their attention, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I know him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." 29, 30, 31.

As this was the end to be answered by the ministry of John, so we believe that in fulfilling his office, he very fitly had recourse to water baptism in order to instruct those among whom he was sent, that they might know that in like manner as by his baptism, the body was immersed in water, so should the souls of men be dipped or immersed into the spirit of Christ, by that baptism of the Holy Ghost of which he spake, alluding to Christ, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner." Mat. iii. 11, 12. Thus we understand this messenger to the Jews, nor does it appear that he ever aimed at any other purpose by his ministry and baptism. Therefore we believe that the office of water baptism, as a Jewish ceremony, designed outwardly to represent a more effectual and saving baptism, ended as to its influence and purpose, when Christ, the great and spiritual baptizer of his true believers, came. This appears to us the true state of the case. But it may be said, if water baptism was not intended as an ordinance, why did the Saviour of the world go to John to be baptized? To this we answer,

that he knew John was his forerunner, the same of whom the prophets had spoken: and therefore if he had not given his baptism countenance, his own disciples might have been left in some doubts, as well as probably some of the Jews, who expected that Elias must first come; and not only so, but in the act of submitting himself to that ministration, he gave evidence to the divine origin of the call of John to that particular service. He in like manner fulfilled the ordinances of the Jews; as in the instance of his submission to circumcision; and therefore he said, when John hesitated about administering his baptism, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Mat. iii. 15. It is proper, even though thy mission has but a temporary existence, that as it was a measure appointed for its proper uses, I should give it my countenance, as I have done every other dispensation of divine appointment. But that those outward and typical dispensations were not to remain, we apprehend, may be gathered by his own testimony afterward: for though he informed his disciples that John, who we have already said, was his immediate forerunner,

was the greatest prophet born of a woman, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. And it is remarkable, that at the time when some of his disciples saw his transfiguration upon the mount, and Moses, the representative of the Jewish law, and Elias talking with him, that both these passed away, but Jesus remained; and at that time was heard a voice from heaven, informing them, that "this is my beloved Son, hear ye him:" which to us appears no less than saying, that though for wise purposes you have had the dispensation of the law, and also that of John the Baptist, yet now these having been as schoolmasters to bring to my beloved Son, you are to lean only upon him. But the disciples remembering the prophecy concerning Elias, queried of Christ, "But how say the Jews that Elias must first come?" He then informed them that Elias had already come, and they had done to him as they listed. By which his disciples knew that he spake of John the Baptist. Wherefore we infer that the Saviour of men, having led his creation through different administrations, and opened the way to come to him, the all-sufficient means of salvation, has now

completely blotted out the hand writing of ordinances, and given a free and full opportunity to enter the last and highest dispensation. And his pleasure, we believe, is that no outside means of dependence should detach the spiritual members of his church from leaning upon and following him. He even drew the disciples off from resting upon his person, that they might come to receive and live in his spirit. It is, says he, expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come. As though he had said, if I remain with you, ye will not be the spiritual followers that I design you to be, you will still lean upon my outward testimony and instructions; but if I go away, I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, and he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. "But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and no lie." John, ii. 26, 27. This is the end of all outward religion. It is neither the law of Moses, the baptism of John, nor any

thing less than the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. The reader may observe, that having given a particular account of the end for which John the Baptist appears to have been sent into the world, and noticed that he was not designed to be the founder of a system, but merely a witness, and minister to the Jews, I have omitted saying any thing about the practice of the disciples in regard to water baptism, apprehending it would not be necessary. But before I wholly leave the subject, I will add, that when Christ commissioned his disciples to go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as water is not mentioned in the charge, we infer that it was not meant; but that he who sent them to preach in his name, would be with them in spirit always, even to the end of the world. And having his spirit and power with them, they should, by its influence, baptize into the divine nature, those who were willing to receive their testimony. This we consider to be the only saving baptism, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.

Having now closed the remarks upon the subject of water baptism, I will just inform the reader, that in going through this point of controversial doctrine, I have apprehended the evidences brought into view are so far conclusive, and so fully manifest that the religion of Christianity is not entangled with Jewish ceremony; that not much is necessary to be remarked upon the profession of others concerning the communion and outward partaking of bread and wine, in commemoration of the Lord's supper. Very little, therefore, will be said on that subject.

ON THE COMMUNION, OR CEREMONY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE society of Friends believe, that the communion of Christ is not an outward partaking of bread and wine, but an union of spirit with God. This they believe to be attainable, and have no doubt is offered to all: and being satisfied that the kingdom is within, that it does not consist in meats and in drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, we are concerned to draw the attention of all from those outward

and formal acts, to that which is spiritual; that they may open to him, who has long stood knocking, and waiting for an entrance; and then they will experience the fulfilment of the promise, that he " will come in and sup with them, and they with him." Rev. iii. 20. Under those views of the heavenly union, which we believe may be attained, our attention is directed to a divine and spiritual communion; this we are satisfied cannot be supplied by any outward ordinance to which men have recourse in their own will and time; and the profane may partake of, as well as the professor. We therefore look for, and at times enjoy, the inward and spiritual bread, which only can nourish the soul up unto eternal life; and have no confidence in any of those outward ordinances. We desire not to speak harshly of those fellow professors of Christianity, who believe in the necessity to perpetuate the outward sign; but leave them where they may apprehend their duty leads them. But as we are satisfied that the only strength, nourishment, and consolation of the dedicated disciple of Christ must be the light and aid of his holy spirit, we wish not, by any outward act, to

produce a dependence upon any other means. Therefore, although we do not join with others in the outward sign, we are nevertheless concerned that all may come to the living and eternal substance; and in that, know for themselves, the whole man brought into subjection, and the will of God so fulfilled in and upon them, that they may really partake of the new wine of the kingdom, and no longer remain in the old and fallen nature, but in the new and spiritual life, where the spiritual meat and drink may be received, and where the life of Christ becomes their life. Then shall they partake spiritually of his body and his blood, and sit at his heavenly communion table, in the unity of the spirit, which is the bond of peace.

OF OATHS.

THE society of Friends are of opinion that swearing is not only unreasonable in itself, but contrary to the positive command of Christ, and in no instance ought to be submitted to by those who profess to be Christians. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not

forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Mat. v. 33 to 38. The apostle James appears to have very fully adopted the counsel of his divine Master, and to believe it right to give his testimony against swearing. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." James, v. 12. Taking this general view of the antichristian practice of swearing, the society of Friends bear their testimony against it, and believe that, among Christians, it ought to be abolished.

It would require a considerable history, were I to give a full account of the many sufferings which our predecessors passed through, because they refused to take oaths:

and certainly it is a practice which ought to be seriously considered by every man; and more especially if he professes any claim to the character of a Christian. Because there is no point of duty enjoined by the Saviour of the world, more clearly stated than this, to refrain from swearing. Nor do I know of any practice in civil government, so inconsistent with the very end to be answered by it. But lest we should be thought to start a new doctrine in regard to oaths, it may be useful to show that an objection against the cause and practice of swearing, was made by others. Polybius has said, "the use of oaths in judgment was rare among the ancients; but, by the growing of perfidiousness, so grew also the use of oaths." Basil the Great saith, "swearing is the effect of sin." And Ambrose, that "oaths are only a condescendency for defect." Chrysostom saith, that "an oath entered when evil grew, when men exercised their frauds, when all foundations were overturned. That oaths took their beginning from the want of truth." And again, "for what end wilt thou force him to swear, whom thou believest not that he will speak the truth?" Many others might

be mentioned, to show, that swearing has been condemned by others, as well as Friends. But if no one had come to own this doctrine of Christ, from the time that he delivered it until now, it would even in that case be proper that a Christian society, in conformity to his express commands, should refuse to swear. Having stated the foregoing, I will refer the reader to Barclay's Apology, where he will find this particular treated upon at large: and where, I am of the opinion, all the reasons for swearing, or in favour of it, are fully and clearly refuted.

OF WAR.

THE society of Friends believe that all wars and fightings, whether offensive or defensive, are contrary to the peaceable spirit of Christ; and therefore not lawful for Christians. If a religion which has for its object the redemption of fallen man from under the dominion of corrupt passions and dispositions did not forbid wars and fightings, if it could even suppose a case, either national or individual, which could not be settled among its followers without an appeal to

arms, such a religion, in the opinion of Friends, would be unworthy of the name of Christ. A main pillar in the Gospel is the spirit of non-resistance: without this spirit, the whole ground of Christianity would be lost: a principle which calls upon its followers to love enemies, to forgive injuries, and when we are smitten upon one cheek, to turn the other also. The Saviour of the world did not only deliver such precepts, he also confirmed them by example: because, though he had all power in heaven and in earth, yet he submitted to the unrighteous decision of the Jews, and bore, without resistance, to be nailed to the cross; setting us an example that we should follow his footsteps. We therefore believe that he has not left his followers at liberty to enter the field of blood and destruction; that we are to endure, with unconquerable patience, and leave our cause to the decision of a righteous judge: praying for those who may thus injure us, after his blessed example, when suffering upon the tree, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But we are told, if this be the duty of Christians, if they are in no case to defend themselves against an enemy, not on-

ly nations, but individuals, would trample upon the right of each other. This is saying, in substance, that Christianity, if it does not allow of wars, will be a religion not suitable for man, and consequently ought to be rejected. Those who reason thus, are not to be spoken to as Christians: if they are spoken to on the subject, it must be without any claim on their part to Christianity; and with such, the author has no prospect of reasoning here. But all those who lay claim to the Christian religion, he conceives, must believe that wars and fightings are contrary to the spirit of Christ, who has informed us, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." John, xviii. 36. I am aware that many just observations and reasonings have already appeared against wars and fightings; and it therefore does not seem necessary to say much upon the subject. But when I consider the warlike measures which singularly engage the councils of nations, and the dependence which seems every where placed upon human force, and contrast this with what Christianity calls for, I am convinced that much more is

necessary to be done, before this dark cloud will be removed from the professors of Christianity. I see no reason to expect its removal, until men shall weary themselves with their own deceivings. The probability is, that there will be wars and rumours of wars, and that, in a national point of view, the end is not yet. But I believe there are some in most countries, who are redeemed from the spirit of war, and I doubt not there are those who will submit to suffer any persecution that the governments of this world, in the darkness of human policy, may inflict upon them, rather than stain their hands in human blood. I feel concerned, while writing upon this important testimony, that the religious society of which I am a member, may look well to its conduct in all respects on this subject. My fears have been, that many are in danger of departing from the true ground of this testimony. Those only will stand, in a time of trial, who have placed their confidence in the all-sufficient arm of the Almighty; and who have no dependence upon the arm of flesh; who know that the kingdom of their divine Master is not of this world; and who themselves are redeem-

ed from the love of it, and prefer his cause to all other considerations. Such will be kept free from all the measures of war, and endeavour to lead quiet and peaceable lives among men, in all godliness and honesty. Neither will they be tossed about by any of the changes that are going on in the world. But being satisfied with the peace of God in their own souls, they will lean upon him, not daring to mix with any thing but what they know proceeds from the light and spirit of truth. But when the affections of men fasten upon worldly possessions, they are in danger of mixing with the policy and spirit of the times, and often the steps they take to promote their own selfish ends, are contrary to the benign purpose of Him who regards with an equal eye all the nations of the earth. Hence, such become instrumental in hastening the very troubles they meant to guard against. As we have professed to own the Spirit of Truth for our guide, and by its influence to be led out of every thing which is not conformable to it, I have seen that the day calls for great watchfulness, and that without it, though we profess to have a testimony against war, we may give our strength

and countenance in favour of measures, the remote tendency whereof may be to shed the blood of our sons in the field of battle. Under these considerations my mind has often been exercised, and I have been desirous that some way might open to call the attention of my fellow professors, and invite them to stand separate from every thing which has not its life in the life of truth. Until this is the case, we shall feel weak in maintaining the dignified testimony to the peaceable spirit of the Gospel of Christ; in whose Gospel and power, the prophet Daniel saw the saints of the Most High standing, saying one to another, how long shall these things be? They were not mixed with the multitude, but were trusting in the Lord. Under these considerations, I have felt desires that all might come out of the wisdom of the creaturely will, believing that though there may be many things admitted by this wisdom, which may appear founded in equity, and due from man to man, yet that the government of men, both in a national and individual capacity, is the ultimate and sovereign right of the Almighty, and that the establishment of peace on earth can never be ex-

pected, until the rule and dominion is surrendered up to him. Then will that kingdom be set up, both individually and in the world, which the same enlightened prophet saw. "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Dan. ii. 44. While the pride of man continues to usurp the government, and his will and wisdom dictate the measures to be adopted, the effect will be what this fallen wisdom ever has produced. But when that kingdom shall be set up, which is already begun in the souls of many people, it shall remove the spirit of war, and establish in the room thereof, the peaceful reign of the Messiah. As members of this kingdom, which the Lord designs to exalt, what have such to do with any other, but to be examples of the peaceable government of Christ? Therefore, let all those who profess to be his subjects, and who believe in his lamb-like, suffering nature, beware how they mar his work in their own souls, and retard its progress in the earth, lest

they stumble and fall, and lose that inheritance in his light and truth, to which they are called.

But some will say, that if this be the profession of Friends, they are against all civil government, and look for the kingdom and government of Christ to do all things, to answer all ends and purposes. To such I would observe, that the foundation of Christian government stands upon the ground of conviction, convincement, and good will to men: and that I know of no constitution or government in the world that at this day agrees with Christianity: they all make provision for war, they all complete their ends by force. And therefore, it becomes a people who cannot act upon opposite principles, to be on their guard how they connect themselves with the measures of government. The Christian may live in the world, he may comply with all the commands of government, either actively or passively, and there is nothing to fear from him, if he be a Christian. And if all men were Christians, the principles of civil government would be changed from compulsion to consent, the subjects from force to submission without it.

But I may be told, all men are not Christians, therefore force is necessary to protect Christians. This consequence will not follow; for a Christian is like a plant in the earth, he stands till he is cut down; or in other words, his stay on earth is wholly submitted to the will of his Creator; and because his Creator has forbidden the exercise of force, he knows that it is not the will of his Lord that he should resort to it, even when he cannot stand without it. He is removed from the world, he has made no resistance, he dies in peace; therefore, by the power of non-resistance, he is made victorious; and this is our victory, even our faith. And thus it is, that the Lamb and his followers are unconquerable, because they never strive. All, therefore, who take this ground, are members of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace; they are redeemed from war, and the occasions that lead to it, and stand in that spirit which is of God, and which is willing, like him, that blessings should flow upon the evil and the good.

I have confidence that the day is fast approaching, when, according to the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, "he shall judge

among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah, ii. 4. and Micah, iv. 4. But there will be a qualification to say one to another, " Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." Isaiah, ii. 5.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

HAVING now completed a summary of the profession of the society of Friends, respecting ministry, worship, and doctrines, I come in the next place to speak of church government. That it is consistent with the practice of primitive believers in Christ to adopt some form of government, will appear from many passages in the Scriptures; and that they were united for this purpose, we may surely take for granted. But it is possible, and even probable, that after the apostles had received the promise which was made unto the Fathers, and were united in the Holy Spirit, that they did not, at their memorable meeting on the day of Pentecost,

agree upon all the orders and rules, which, by the light of Christ, they in process of time were led into; for they were not then aware, that their ministry was to extend to the Gentiles, or that these also were to become members in the same spiritual family. I shall, in the first place, introduce such testimony as has served to satisfy me, that they were in some general connexion, and that they held certain powers and instructions which their Holy Head had delivered to them. The first which relates to the foundation whereon the church should be built, appears when our Lord asked them, "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered, and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth

shall be loosed in heaven." Mat. xvi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Our Lord, knowing that his disciples were to receive a divine impression, by which they should clearly understand in whose company they were, makes use of this opportunity to inform them on what foundation his church should stand; and having noticed to Peter, that the knowledge which he was then favoured with was spiritual and divine; he holds up the principle by which this knowledge was obtained, as a principle capable of giving access to the knowledge of the mind of God. But this was not only given to Peter; for if that had been the case, all others must have been excluded; which cannot be admitted; for the same spirit opened the hearts of all the living and spiritually begotten children, in every age of the world. Now, all they that have submitted to the manifestation of the spirit, and stand in the life and power of it, are made capable of looking into the mind of the spirit. We therefore believe, that the church of Christ is built upon this foundation, this corner stone, which the prophet spoke of. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried

stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Isaiah, xxviii. 16. To this same foundation hath the testimony of the faithful been given, and it has by them been esteemed, though others have rejected it, and have sought to build upon outward forms and opinions, denying that God has continued this spiritual principle of light; an error which was foreseen and foretold. "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner." Psa. cxviii. 22. And our Lord inquires of the Pharisees, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" Mat. xxi. 42. And the apostles have given testimony that this corner stone was Jesus Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts, iv. 12. We, of consequence, are convinced, that the church of Christ being built upon him, and by him, its members have fellowship with him, and one with another. He it is, therefore, by whom all who are opened in spirit, are opened into the kingdom of God; and by him, all that are bound on earth are bound in heaven, and all that

are loosed on earth are loosed in heaven. The apostles and true believers in the inward life of him who is the light of men, being built up in him, a spiritual building, and having received from him this wisdom and power of God, while they remain in him, and act under his government, whomsoever they bound on earth was bound in heaven, and on the other hand, whomsoever they loosed on earth was loosed in heaven. But though it is consistent with the doctrine of the Scriptures, for a spiritual building possessing unity and power to be built up, yet it also appears, that among the members of this building, there may be want of watchful and faithful obedience; in which case, the unity is interrupted, and offences are given. Our Lord, knowing the frailty of man, has therefore condescended to instruct his followers how to proceed in such instances. "Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, and if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Mat. xviii. 15. Here it may be remarked, that it is allowed to be possible that a brother may so far depart from the influence and government of

the head of the church, as to the guilty of a trespass; but though this should be the case, he is not, on the supposition of an individual, to be cast away: but before judgment is passed upon him, he shall have a hearing, even though he should refuse to hear a brother, who had told him his fault alone. "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." 16, 17. A separation is here pointed out, but it is evident that where this takes place, the member has become a party in opposition to the church; he has gone from the unity of the spirit in himself, he has left the true foundation, and is no longer qualified to enjoy the fellowship of Christ: nor can any human power restore him to the unity and fellowship of the church. But he is in the spirit of opposition, among the children of disobedience, who walk not in the truth. When any, therefore, thus fall away from the life and spirit of Christ, and from the unity of his church; these are as

though they had never known the truth, and must be left to the judgment of the great day of the Lord. Now, the day of the Lord is a day of divine light renewed or opened in the soul; and in this day, the opposing and strong will is brought down, the transgressing nature is taken hold of, and if the individuals submit to the light of this day, they are brought to see themselves, and the chains of darkness under which they had been held: and as they become humbled, they are blest with a dispensation of repentance for the sins that are past; and by the merciful atonement of Christ, permitted to be loosed in heaven and on earth; and to walk in his spirit who taketh away the sins of the world, and clothes these with his own lamb-like non-resisting nature, by which they are prepared to be members of his church. The existence of order in the church is evidenced by his own instructions respecting the manner in which an offending brother was to be treated, as I have before stated. In this there is ground to believe that the church must have been in possession of some formal obligations proper to be observed; and such as the members living under the government

of truth would always comply with. But the great danger in those outward and formal means of government, is that men may enlarge their number upon the principles of human sagacity, without the leadings or counsel of the head of the church. This, I apprehend, has been an error which has crept into most societies of Christian professors. It is an error which may always be expected, where men, in their own wisdom and wills, undertake to make rules for the government of the consciences of others. The apostles, very early in the Christian church, were made sensible of the necessity of care on this head; as appears in the conclusion adopted by them, and sent among their believing brethren of the Gentiles. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." Acts, xv. 28, 29. But as they who are gathered into the mind of Christ, continue subject to him in all things, there will be no danger of forming rules or regula-

tions in his church, that shall be oppressive to the tender consciences of any of the members. For want of this subjection has arisen most of the divisions in Christendom; as would appear, were we to examine the declarations of faith and belief to which many professors have been obliged to subscribe if they remained in connexion. But where the light of Christ is regarded as the only sufficient guide, though order and propriety will be required, and even rules be entered into, yet all will harmonize with the evidence of his own blessed spirit, in the souls of men. And such as transgress, will have no room to say, that the obligation upon them was not of divine origin. Under a church government thus founded in the wisdom of God, and standing in connexion with the preservation of the souls of men, no conscientious ground of dissent can exist; while the members of the church are preserved upon the right foundation: and therefore, if any prove unfaithful, and are overtaken in a fault, those who are spiritually minded will be concerned to restore such; and their labours being in the spirit of meekness and love, and having nothing in them that will kindle op-

position, the offending brother, it may be expected, will confess his fault, and return to the unity of the church. But if after such brotherly entreaty, and without foundation for objection against the rule of the church, he remains on the offending ground, then the unavoidable consequence must be, that he will number among the transgressors; and in his obstinacy be separated from the unity of the spirit, which is the bond of peace. To all such, there is given the fruit of their own doings; and while they shut out the light, and foster a spirit of opposition, they cannot partake of the consolations of the faithful, but are bound in heaven and on earth; and in the fetters of darkness they must remain until they are willing to cease from the spirit of opposition, and walk in the light of the Son of God. Much more might be said on the ground and principle of church government; but the foregoing may serve to give the reader a view of our profession in the case, and to convince him that they who are turbulent and opposing, cannot at the same time be members of the church of Christ.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS TO THE READER, ESPECIALLY TO MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

THE foregoing I have written in consequence of a belief, that many in the society of Friends are too little acquainted with the nature of our profession; also, with a prospect that strangers might be informed, without much reading, what we believe, and not be left to form opinions of the society from the reports they may hear, or from the ministry alone. Because, in either case, the means for a correct judgment would be insufficient. From the labours of those engaged in the ministry, it would be reasonable to expect a minute explanation of the doctrine of Friends in each particular case. Their service is much more frequently to speak to the states of the people, and to call home the mind to the light of Christ within, than to offer extensive doctrinal testimony. It may be thought by some, that the society have already a sufficient number of explanatory treatises, and that any thing further is unnecessary. But I believe that on deliberate examination, this will not be found to be the case, though

there are many valuable works extant. I feel particularly concerned that the rising generation may be drawn off from the deceptive glitter of the world, and that early attention may be given to their religious improvement. In consequence of this concern, my thoughts have been often exercised. In the course whereof, I have been led to take into view some of the disadvantages under which they labour; and it has appeared to me, that the young and tender minds of children are often injured for want of proper religious weight in parents. Early in life, their attention is open to observe the conduct of parents; and if they see there is want of regularity, that parents are sometimes amiable and pleasant, and at others fretful and ill-natured, this tends to produce difficulty to them, and they are at a loss to know how to conduct, so as to obtain approbation. But if, as they advance in years, the Shepherd of souls should visit their tender minds by the word of his grace, which I have no doubt is the case at a much earlier period than many are aware of, they should then find that their parents were not subject to the divine principle, it must be a cause of stumbling, and thus

the mind may be retarded in its progress from earth to heaven. The dispensations of divine love which are shed over the young minds, lead into love and affection for all around them; and when they are in this precious state, how must they be shocked, if for some trivial act, which may be the effect of want of judgment, they should be addressed in passion. And yet this is what all parents of children are liable to, unless they are themselves brought under the divine government. That I have seen that while it is a beautiful and interesting task, it is a very important one, to educate and bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; nor do I belive that any can perform this duty as they ought to do, who are not subject to the light of Christ. And I have often thought, that if parents were more heavenly minded, their children would be less hardy, and more passive to them and among their friends, than is the case with many in our day. The truly awakened and dedicated mind may often find occasion to shed the tear of sorrow over the children of this generation. But I am of the opinion, that if we lived in the humility and reverence before God which our holy profes-

sion calls for, we should have greater access to the throne of his grace, and the life and power of the gospel would spread in our families. He who was the friend of faithful Abraham would clothe us with greater authority and qualification to command those of our household. And our precious offspring, beholding the solemnity and sweetness of our spirits, would feel an early and dutiful attachment to us; they would not be difficult to command, but would be led into obedience by the concurrent operation of our divine Guide, who is ever willing to assist us in every duty which he is requiring at our hands. He is able to meet with our children when they are in their retired places, and if we were witnesses for him, would make our conduct instrumental to awaken his light and truth in their souls. But in the present state, how many who are parents have been unfaithful, and turned their attention to an outside religion, fulfilling the works of the law, which never made the comers thereunto perfect, careful to lay a fair foundation in the world, and to lay up treasure on earth; very industrious and frugal, plain in living and plain in manner, but enemies to the cross of

Christ, not scholars in his school, and therefore not qualified to instruct their children; but their spirits being in the world, their conversation relates to it; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. When the rising generation are educated under these circumstances, and the conversation they daily hear is bounded by temporal concerns, the effect must be to obstruct the growth of the seed of the kingdom of heaven in them; and it afterwards seems to require something like a miracle to bring their minds back to the principle we profess. If in our religious meetings they are sometimes spoken to in the demonstration and power of the spirit, they find, on their return home, that they are soon landed in the same round of subjects and conversation. Thus the Lord's work is retarded in its progress in the souls of the youth, and many of them grow up with but little religious concern about them. It appears to me, therefore, that the day calls for an awakening testimony to be borne among the people, both among the professors and others: and I am often put in mind of the instruction given to the disciples. "Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the

labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his vineyard." Mat. ix. 37, 38. At this day, there are bright talented men in the society, and I have no doubt the Head of the church has often awakened their souls, by his all powerful word of truth, and brought them to see the neglected state of his cause. And I believe, that if such were faithful to the day of their visitation, they would be taken from their state of worldly security, as well as from their worldly pursuits, and prepared for the Master's use; and a beautiful band would be raised to proclaim the wondrous works of the Lord. The church would be replenished with judges, as at the first, and counsellors, as in the beginning. I have felt an awful blank in my day, a blank which I have seen is owing to the unfaithfulness of the strong men of the world in the present time; and I believe, that unless these who have been cared for by the Bishop of souls, become obedient to the heavenly vision, and submit to walk in the straight and narrow way, the seed of the kingdom in them will be so deeply buried in their earthly nature, that the warming beams of the sun of

righteousness will no more act upon it, and they be left to themselves. But O! ye quickened souls, of every description and station in the church, let us unite, and with all humility, patience, and perseverance, fulfil the work of our day, and though we should, in the assemblies of the people, have little else but trials and sufferings, may we be kept the Lord's time, and in no instance attempt to reign, while he that is our best life is in suffering. But as we remain inwardly attentive to the unfolding of his light, we shall be opened in a clear sight of the state of the seed of the kingdom, and our ministry will be crowned with a holy and penetrating authority; the weak will be strengthened, the hungry fed, the blind brought to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead in trespasses and sins quickened and brought to life: I have seen that much depends, in this day, upon the leaders of the people keeping their feet upon the true and living foundation, walking in the light, even as He, our holy Head, is in the light; and I am satisfied, that the more these are concerned to have their lamps trimmed, and their lights burning, the less they will be moved by what may be going on

in the earth. For it is a consequence of the truth, where it has the full government, to make its followers unchangeable. It is itself so, and all they who come to live in it, are grounded and settled on an unchangeable foundation. And though they see all things change around them, they have a holy habitation unmoved, protected by him that has all power in heaven and in earth. Now, those who enter this holy and heavenly habitation, they are redeemed from the spirit and love of this world; and they know, that as the kingdom of their Lord is not of this world, so neither is theirs; and though they are subject to every ordinance of man, for conscience sake, yet they are not in the spirit or measures of the kingdoms of this world. They may see the governments of men turn and overturn, but on their part they neither build up nor pull down; neither their joys nor their sorrows depend upon the measures of this world; but only and alone upon the dispensations of their divine Master. I wish not to tire my reader by speaking of the state of a dedicated follower of Christ; but I much desire that my fellow professors of the same faith, as we believe

we are called to lift up an ensign to the nations, even the ensign of peace, may be so guarded as to keep separate from every measure which may in any degree disqualify for this important service. And I have no doubt but, whatever persecutions and trials may come upon us, through the mistaken policy of men, for our faithfulness to the testimony of the Gospel spirit, we shall in the end, if we keep our places, have to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

THE END.

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